Burning Man *is* a rave!

by DESPERADO

What's all this shit about Burning Man not being a rave?! It's bullshit piled higher than the haystacks under the Man. Who the fuck decides what is or isn't a rave? What, did someone in the BM organization look in Webster's? I did, and my 1958 edition says "rave" comes from the Old French *raver*, which is to be delirious, to revel. Holy fuck, isn't that what Burning Man is all about anyway?

Somebody in a position of "authority" at Burning Man obviously got scared and didn't want to call BM a rave 'cause the "popular" media (popular with advertisers, that is) decided to make rave culture the latest bogeyman. Legislators, cops, family values jerks, and everyone else decided to pick on ravers 'cause the kids and kid-like adults are basically innocent, vulnerable, gentle spiritual seekers lost in the miasma of multiple states of orgiastic, druggy consciousness and they can't fight back. They just wanna dance!

See, here's what raving is about: opening up, abandoning the ego, and attaining inner peace. Yes, folks, that's what ravers want. That's their agenda. For the time being, however, we ravers want only to catch the sound waves emanating across the playa of the Black Rock Desert.

The DJ is priest and choir, the dancers are the congregation. We're all on a cosmic voyage the pigs can't understand. I use the '60s term of derision for "police officers" with total cosmic awareness, understanding it revives memories of earlier oppressions. But it's not truly the "pigs" who want to oppress ravers; it's the parents, the ones who are afraid because they don't understand kids who only seem happy when dressed weird, listening to their weird music, and tripping out to weird cosmic ideas. But, hey, wasn't that just the way *they* were with rock n' roll?! So lighten up, parents, okay?

And *puh-leeze*, get over the idea that Burning Man isn't a rave. It's *the* rave by which all other raves are measured.

Quotes for the playa

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." — *Albert Einstein*

"To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk." — *Thomas Edison*

"Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time." — *Stephen Wright*

"Think big thoughts but relish small pleasures." — *H. Jackson Brown, Jr.*

"Sometimes you have to look reality in the eye and deny it." — *Garrison Keillor*

"If you think that there is good in everyone, you haven't met everyone." — *Anonymous*

"The secret to creativity is knowing how to hide your sources." — *Albert Einstein*

"For a list of all the ways technology has failed to improve the quality of life, please press three." — *Alice Kahn*

"The power of accurate observation is commonly called cynicism by those who have not got it." — *George Bernard Shaw*

"Any fool can make a rule, and any fool will mind it." — *Thoreau*

"Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what's right." — *Isaac Asimov*

"The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking." — *John Kenneth Galbraith*

"It is better to be looked over than overlooked." — *Mae West*

"Having something to say is overrated." — *Adair Lara*

"Always remember you are unique, just like everyone else." — *Anonymous*

"The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits." — *Albert Einstein*

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." — *Muriel Strode*

"Life is a great big canvas; throw all the paint on it you can." — *Danny Kaye*

"Life is too important to be taken seriously." — *Oscar Wilde*

— quotes compiled by Miz Deidre

Gentrification on the playa

by CHRISTOPHER STRIDER COOK

With the state of ticket price increases, one is lead to wonder, "Just who is Burning Man for anyway?"

It's obvious that Burning Man has been changing — people have been saying it for years now. "I remember when" has become — this year especially — an oft-overheard conversational prefix. As the size of Burning Man has changed, so have its inhabitants. Where are the struggling artists of yore? Gone — or at the very least, their numbers have weakend. This will be the second year without veteran and former head of public works, Chicken John. (Okay, so he might be here this year, but that's just so he can criticize it.)

Adrian Roberts

Yes, I'm here to tell you that Black Rock City is being gentrified. Rising ticket costs and increased attendance have dramatically changed the quality of life in our city on the playa. Not only has the 'rent' gotten higher, but my space has gotten smaller as well. My campsite gets progressively more diminutive with each new attendee. Come Thursday or Friday night, I'm lucky if I still have a place to park my bike, let alone put up a dining canopy. This year, I've had to let my guest tent go unpacked.

thoughtful rant

With this influx of new developments being put up all around my humble desert dwelling, along with their associated pollution (noise, light, and what's that smell?) it's starting to look like I might just want to move back to San Francisco.

And with this new breed of Burner comes a baser, less creative element: Men who just want to get laid. Creativity for intellectual pursuit be damned. Pretty lights and loud music must surely attract women, no? Large scale installations for the enjoyment of all, for us to bask in the glow of a great achievement? Nope, but it sure does impress the chicks.

The lower rent side (formerly known as "the Loud Side") of Black Rock City is slowly but surely being retrofitted with "Antarctic" camps, offering the largest BTU cooling of any other theme camps. Meanwhile, on the opposite end of town, the RVs are only getting bigger and the generators louder. Other obvious signs of the encroaching masses are the extensive sight and sound extravaganzas that the Esplanade camps are tossing their dot.com money into.

With Burning Man's ever-increasing ticket prices, the only people who will be able to afford to come will be dot.com yuppies.
Lenny Jones

The cultural Everyman is being pushed aside for the affluently attached. Who gets the "Inner Circle" Central Camp placement? Big money, that's who. You'll have trouble finding the breakthrough ideas this year, as they'll be hidden somewhere behind the massive Zardoz-themed dance club or the towering streetlight flowers. There was a time when this humble publication, *Piss Clear* — certainly a community staple — was given such a prime location. But no more. In these times of economic boom, the alternative paper is relegated out to the avenues.

Burning Man has long held to the notion of building a community, but throughout the years, it has done less and less to foster such a feeling. Take for instance the main stage. What main stage? You'd have to look back several years before you could see a city-run location for the community's budding musicians. Nowadays, you can only find music at theme camp (Black Rock City's version of "corporate") sponsored stages. This leaves a gap. Where are the non-sponsored musicians to play? I guess it doesn't really matter anyway, since those musicians can't afford the gate fees anyway.

Whether we like it or not, the new economy of Black Rock City is here. Considering the money lost to a week away from work, the $200 ticket, the travel expenses, the possible vehicle rental — along with the cash outlay for various "art" projects, theme camp building materials, and the implied mandate that one *must* participate, Burning Man has turned into a rather expensive undertaking. And due to the cost and the economies of scale, more and more Burning Man veterans who made this event what it used to be have simply chosen not to attend. It won't be long now before the only ones left are the dot.com ravers. And won't *that* be fun.

Too many idiots this year

by ANONYMOUS

First of all, I just want to say that I'm having a ton of fun at Burning Man this year — although that probably has more to do with the people that I'm around than with the actual "Burning Man Experience," because there are also quite a few things that are *not* going over so well. This is just something one needs to expect when there's any sort of crowd, especially one that's 28,000 people strong.

And that in itself is most likely the biggest problem of Burning Man. Too many people. Not enough... hmmm... life? Juice? Ah, whatever — there just ain't enough of it anymore.

Too many drunken idiots. Actually, they don't even have to be drunk, or stoned, or whatever the hell they're on. Let's just say too many idiots.

Too many drugged-out, naked, body-painted, raver dancers too!
Keith Phillips

Okay, even *that's* making it more dramatic than it really is. The real problem is that there are just too many normal people. Of the 28,000 people here this year, I really doubt that any more than 4000 of them are doing *anything* interesting. And most of what these people are doing isn't very exciting anyway. Painting themselves blue. Wearing a funny hat. Whooee. Partee. And worse yet: "Let's get together with mummy and daddy's money and build a big, loud *rave* camp. Everyone will *hear* how *cool* we are and flock to us like little moths! Word, bro!"

bitter rant

This year, we're pitched in the middle of nowhere between *two* rave camps.

I don't know if they're having a contest to see who's the loudest, but I'd have to call it a tie. And the big deal is, I ain't a "Mr. Grumpy, rain-on-your-parade"-kind of dude. If people are actually having *fun*, I might not join in, but I can respect that folks want to get down and funky at Burning Man, even if that ain't my bag.

But the thing is, neither of these camps attract any more than, say 50 people, tops. And 90 percent of the time — yeah, at night — there isn't *anyone* there besides the camp occupants, standing around looking at each other, wondering if they should be the first to abandon their camp and look for something more fun to do.

Of course, the music continues on, despite the fact that there might be only one dude in the geo-dome.

Have you ever tried to sleep next to a *rave* camp? It's hard. You wake up again and again because, for chrissakes, it keeps *pounding*. Earplugs are useless. This shit *vibrates*. You flutter your eyelids in disbelief, wondering what the hell time it is and then realize — the sun is fucking up. And they're still playing that goddamn music.

Are they human? Do they sleep at all? Or have they fled the scene entirely?

Running away in the middle of the night, letting the music blast away. A lone beacon in the desert — a monument to how cool they are. Hell, who knows how much these fools spent on their awfully creative camp? I'm guessing over five grand. Big ass truck, custom geo-dome, wacky lights, not to mention the sound system. Five grand, easy.

Jocks, lawyers, frat boys, sorority girls, and corporate fuckheads trying to pass themselves off as progressive hipsters for some evil or sad reason. Normal people who just want to go out to the desert and look at all the crazy people, even though they seem to be a dying breed, much like an endangered species, really — leeching off their creativity and energy, just so they can go back and create a hip marketing scheme that will really impress the youth generation. "You need to buy a big, fat SUV so you can go to a cool place like Burning Man, where cool people, like me, go. I was there, man, it's like Woodstock '99, but cooler. I think I saw the Backstreet Boys there, didn't you? They were doing the hula with Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. That was really cool." Not.

Is Burning Man really a cult?

by DISTRIBUTION DICK & THE SADISTIC SQUINCH

Is this *really* a peaceful celebration of freedom and art? Some at Burning Man still cling to this innocent, naive idea.

Little do the hardcore participants realize that in the past few years, Burning Man has morphed into much more than just an orgasmic week of sex, drugs, and music. Some would even go so far as to call this gathering a cult.

conspiracy

The dictionary describes a cult as a "devoted attachment to, or extravagant admiration for a person, principle, etc." An auxiliary to many cults is to create a utopian society, where the chosen have the riches of others bestowed upon them. In many cases, those utopian visions shatter into totalitarian societies.

Let's start with the riches. In order to attend, one must first pay anywhere from $100 to $250. And what do you get for your money? Nothing! Oh yeah, you get to pay for the privilege of camping out on a dusty desert floor, keeping your vehicle parked for about a week, on it's way to becoming permanently ruined with acidic playa dust. You have to spend even more money on food, water, camping gear, gas, costumes, trinkets, and other items to prove that you're a "participant." You get to subject yourself to the sometimes brutal and always unpredictable conditions of the weather and terrain that is the Black Rock Desert. On top of all this, there is an implied requirement to participate in the events planned by the Burning Man organization, or risk being labeled a "yahoo."

Often, you're asked to be a "volunteer." And, as in a cult, you are given a position within a carefully-structured hierarchy. One of the first volunteer jobs for many is becoming a "Greeter" at the main gate. A seemingly innocent job, but in reality, you are putting up a front for the thousands of others simply following in your footsteps.

Next thing you know you're a "Lamplighter," or perhaps you're training to move up in the ranks to become a "Ranger."

Lies are told to volunteers, participants, and the media alike. The Burning Man organization writes their own copy for the media, which allows them to selectively disseminate the "facts" as they see fit. For example, this year, it was widely-reported that Black Rock City would be back at the "12 mile" mark. Only after almost everyone had already purchased their tickets did they inform us that we would be relatively at the same place as last year. Here comes another train.

In fact, many aspects of the Burning Man organization are troubling and dangerous. Inner members have their own set of terms and slang that set them apart from others, just as in some cults. The organization as a whole always seems to be in a state of confusion, which is to the benefit of their leading force. If they are always kept busy, even though confused, they don't have time to rise and revolt. In addition, many members of the organization have practically committed their lives (and their livelihood) to Burning Man. They live each day in anticipation and preparation for the next year's event.

Adrian Roberts

And finally, there is the ritual. The central focus each year is the burning of a larger-than-life idol of a man, which is filled with explosives, insuring a dramatic spectacle to behold. On the night of the burn, everyone is summoned to the "idol" to observe and pay homage, as it is ritualistically set on fire. Many participants become so overcome with emotion and, dare I say, devotion, that they run in and through the fire, risking serious injury. Many "participants" appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol — or perhaps some other subtle form of mind control.

So what's to be done here in "Harveytown"? Are forced labor and spiked Kool-Aid just around the corner, as well as a new fleet of Rolls-Royces for Larry? The only solution to this grave situation is to start within. Our humble suggestion is to install cameras everywhere, to capture our "community" for the whole world to see. We also feel very strongly that the entire city needs to be fully informed of each and every decision wagered by the Burning Man organization, and that everything should be taken to a citizen vote. We built this city with our sweat, imagination, strength, money, and — let's not forget — art. That's what it's all supposed to be about. So, volunteer, and help organize, but resist the temptation to follow. This cult can be prevented.

Bitter Love

by DAN BITTER

sex advice

Hey Everyone:
Before I answer this year's questions, I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you about my new book, *The Kid: Why I Adopted One When I'm So Broke I Had To Publish A Book Just To Make Ends Meet*. I'll be reading from my book and signing copies at the Black Rock Bookstore on Friday afternoon. Now, on to the questions:

Hey Breeder:
I'm a straight girl from Ohio. First thing yesterday morning, I went to Camp Sunscreen to get a full-body sunscreen massage by some super-hunky guys. The lotion they used didn't feel anything at all like sunscreen, though. It was viscous and sticky, and it left a crust when it dried. The worst part is, it didn't even work! I got a really bad sunburn. What went wrong?

— Red, White, and Blew All Over

Hey RWBAO:
You need to find some men with higher SPF ratings. And speaking of the sun, I just adopted a son! Read all about him in my new book, *The Kid: Why I Adopted One When I'm So Broke I Had To Publish A Book Just To Make Ends Meet*. It's available at finer bookstores throughout the playa.

Hey Breeder:
Somebody told me about these "glory holes" on the playa, where you can just walk up and stick one of your body parts into them, and that you'll receive oral pleasure from an anonymous person of unknown gender. So I went to the Jiffy Lube Lounge, looking for the glory holes, but I couldn't find them. Now of course, I'm not gay or anything, but where can I find these holes?

— Not Gay Or Anything

Hey Faggot (I've always wanted to say that):
Silly! Everyone knows that glory holes are inside the big blue box things lined up all around the playa. Why do you think the lines are so long to get into one? Just lift the cover and lie on top of the hole with your dick sticking down into it. If you don't feel anything at first, thrust a little deeper. Have a blast.

And speaking of holes, you can read the "whole" story of how I adopted a kid, in my new book, which, for simplicity, I will from now on abbreviate as *TK:WIAOWISBIHTPABJTMEM*.

Hey Breeder:
I love watching the Critical Tits topless bike ride, but the girls don't look very excited, if you catch my drift. Can't they all put ice on their nipples before they start riding?

***— Everything I Know I Learned From The Movie* Showgirls**

Hey EIKILFTMS:
Well, since the main goal of the bike ride is undoubtedly to tittilate scumbags like you, I suggest you apply the ice yourself. While you're at it, why don't you pinch a few nipples, too? I'm sure they'll love you for it. See ya, Pollyanna.

And speaking of ice... um, well, there's really no way I can stretch this into a plug, is there? Never mind.

Dear Dr. Drew:
I'm a 16-year-old girl, and this is my first year at Burning Man. I find that I have a real strong attraction to long-haired guitar players with tattoos, of which there seem to be several here on the playa. Is this normal?

— Groupie

Hey G:
You were obviously molested by your father. Get some therapy.

Confidential to The Man:
Premature exploding is not uncommon, especially with the added pressure of being watched by 28,000 anxious people. Try thinking about baseball statistics.

Got a question for Dan Bitter? Keep it to yourself, asshole!

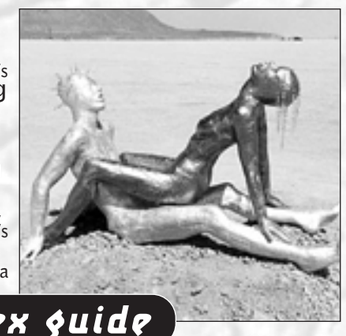
Dysfunctional Family Circus

Another successful Burning Man!

WHAT'S OUT	WHAT'S IN
bicycles	go-peds
BLM permit challenges	anarchy
blue tarps	blue lights
bombs	bongs
Canadians	Australians
flashlights	blinky things
goggles	night vision scopes
no commerce	theme camp brand identity
retox	detox
RVs	rental trucks full of shit
speed	cocaine
Survivor	surviving
trash dumpsters	pack it in, pack it out
UFOs	fake UFOs
walkie-talkies	tin cans and string

— list compiled by Dennis Hinkamp, Eileen Hoyt, Lenny Jones, and Adrian Roberts

Sex guide for the playa


sex guide

Don't believe the hype

First of all, let's get something perfectly clear: Sex on the playa may be fun in that "Woo-hoo! I did it!" achievement sort-of way, but in general, it's highly overrated. Sure, there's a certain romanticized notion to bumping uglies in the middle of the god-forsaken desert, but the truth of the matter is, it comes off as much cooler on paper than it does in execution.

Why? For a variety of reasons. For one thing, have you ever laid or kneeled down naked on the hard playa surface? Not exactly comfy, especially if you're going at it for more than a few minutes. And a blanket doesn't exactly help much. And here's another thing: it gets dirty! And I don't mean in a kinked-out, "hit me harder, baby" sort-of way, either. Playa dust gets into every single crevisse of your body, including your mouth and your hair. It's messy, and at times annoying.

Lastly, there's the whole privacy issue. If getting off in front of others is your and your partner's bag, then fantastic! Black Rock City is an exhibitionist's wet dream! But if you get performance anxiety, finding a bit of privacy on the wide-open playa can be a bit difficult. There are people *everywhere*, and even when you think you're alone, you're never really. Go ahead and go far out into the middle of the playa and start getting nasty. See how many people seem to ride by on their bikes *just* close enough to sneak a peek. It's shouldn't be surprising.

As for boinking inside your own tent or RV, again, privacy becomes an issue. How close are *you* camped to someone else? Chances are, you're here with a group of people, and none of them want to hear you going at it through the thin nylon walls of your tent. And what about an RV? Certainly it's a much more comfortable place to fuck than on an air mattress inside a tent, but unless you're travelling solo or as a pair, you're probably going to have to place a "If this RV's a rockin', don't come knockin'" sign out on the door.

Sure, there are lots of possibilities for sex out here on the playa — but don't delude yourself. Sex out here can be fun (and certainly worth it) but it's probably fraught with more complications than you originally thought.

— Adrian Roberts

Wash and brush

I know, I know, it's not very "earthy" or "survivalist" or "edgy" to shower at Burning Man. And it can seem like a precious waste of water, especially when you know the dust is going to gravitate right back onto your skin just as fast as you wash it off. But we're not talking about dust. Playa dust smells *good*. We're talking about bacteria, which, over the course of several broiling days, grows robust and plentiful as it frolics in the copious sweat accumlating in your armpits and pubes. If you foresee sex in your immediate or near-immediate future, do your partner a favor and at least sponge off.

And while you're at it, brush your teeth too. I love playa people who don't want their partners to smoke because "it's like kissing an ashtray," but then don't bother brushing their own teeth all week long. I'd rather kiss an ashtray than a week-old plateful of spoiled pepperoni and mold-encrusted Pop Tarts.

— Tokyo Rico

Some final tips

First off, keep in mind: playa mud is not an effective lubricant.

This year, *everyone* has a camera or a video camera — so if you don't want to end up naked on the Web in a hardcore video, stay in your tent.

And remember, just because someone gives you a condom, doesn't mean they want to have sex with you.

And finally, hitting on people in line for the porta-potties hardly ever works — but saying "Hey, you wanna come over to my air-conditioned RV to take a shit?" might be worth a shot.

— Dennis Hinkamp

Theme camps and things we'd like to see next year at Burning Man

air conditioning

an all-you-can-eat composting hut

an alien landing

anyone who takes photos of a nude person must also be nude themselves

Autoerotic Asphyxiation Camp

Bumper Car Camp

a dog BBQ to offend all of the idiots who insist on bringing their dogs to BM

The Clapper™ Camp

Concentration Camp, with a giant Concentration game board

Condom Balloon Animals Camp

Cynicism-Free Zone

Do-It-Yourself Rebar Body Piercing Camp

a good Ethiopian restaurant

everyone in Black Rock City secretly agreeing to wear business suits all day on Saturday without telling Larry Harvey

Extra Toilets Camp

Frat Camp

Hammock Camp

IPO Camp

Medical Marijuana Camp

Napster vs. Metallica Death Match Camp

nude Washoe County cops

a people mover

more porta-potties

a presidential campaign stop

John F. Kennedy Jr. Flying School

Roy Weaver's New Mexico School of Controlled Burning Camp

Six Flags over Black Rock

Ted Kennedy Dunking Booth

a 10-minute oil lube

more time

more UFOs

— list compiled by Dennis Hinkamp, Lenny Jones, PF, and Tokyo Rico

I remember when...

... how easy it was to sneak in.

... the first village was right off of Center Camp.

... the Disgruntled Postal Workers could carry unloaded weapons.

... there were no theme camps.

... Art Cars roamed the playa freely.

... you didn't have to wait all day to get off the playa.

... you couldn't see the train.

... *Wired* magazine was recruiting from Burning Man.

... you could have a campfire at your camp.

... there was no Burning Man.

— list compiled by Distribution Dick, Stewart McKenzie, Penfold, PF, and Adrian Roberts

Black Rock City rumor mill

All the Altoids are dosed.

CBS is auditioning people for *Survivor 2* out here.

There are more parachutes at Burning Man than were used in the entire Vietnam War.

Cher died.

They used to test nukes around here.

The whole event is secretly-sponsored by Yahoo!

Larry Harvey and Burning Man newsletter writer Darryl Van Rhey are actually the same person.

Scented baby wipes attract playa chickens.

The Burning Man organization keeps getting its BLM land use permit by funneling cash to the Reno mob.

Larry Harvey is actually Bill Gates. Think about it. Have you ever seen the two of them together in the same place?

The loose feathers from the boas of participants, if not picked up ,will embed themselves into the playa and germinate into playa chickens.

Chelsea Clinton is here again this year.

— compiled by Penfold, Dennis Hinkamp, Adrian Roberts, and Tokyo Rico

Why can't I get laid at BM?

by CAP'N SHADY

Why haven't I gotten laid at Burning Man? I mean, what the fuck? It's not like there's any shortage of men here who are either gay or somewhat adventurous with their sexual boundaries, so what the fuck is going on? How big of a fucking (well, not fucking actually) loser am I anyway?

It's not like I come to Burning Man to get laid, but I'm a nice guy, a self-proclaimed "professional idiot and slick sidekick," I build fairly decent art installations and set them on fire, I wash my genitals before and after intercourse and have some fairly kick-ass playa wear. With these odds, I should be getting laid by default, but alas, for the past three Burning Man festivals, I have come back to society without grabbing that big brass cock ring off the merry-go-round.

I guess the easiest way to remedy this situation would be to drop all the side projects, horseshit, and nonsense I get involved with out here and just come here looking to suck and get sucked. But as I've learned with building art, sometimes the easiest things to do at Burning Man become the most difficult things in the world.

In reviewing my previous BM activities, I came up empty-handed when trying to figure this shit out, so I turned to some fellow Burners and e-mailed them to see, among other things, if they could shed light on this subject.

Would you sleep with this man?

sex

The first person I contacted was Hurricane Linda. When I asked her how come I haven't gotten laid at BM she said: "It's probably because you've been too damn busy building and burning shit to focus on sex. I always think before I get there that I'm gonna focus on sex, but when I get there, I get distracted by bright lights and loud noises, or end up pursuing someone who's similarly distracted and not paying attention."

I next turned to Tokyo Rico, the voice of freedom for the playa. When asked why I haven't gotten laid at BM, he said, "Probably because every woman I know wants to fuck you, but you're gay. Also, some advice? Roll-on."

Well that statement left me utterly confused and hopeless. Tokyo Rico tends to do that to people. But women, could this be true? Could the only people at Burning Man that I could ever have sex with be only women?

Finally I asked the Flamethrower Bitch, a friend of mine since the beginning of Gigsville. Maybe she could shed the most light on this subject. "How come I haven't gotten laid at Burning Man?"

"Because you're a cocksucking bastard who won't settle for a nappy ass whore who would have you."

Man! Burning Man just sucks! One has to change their lifestyle this much just to get laid? So, if I'm to take their information seriously, I should continue setting things on fire, stop building things, and just switch to women.

Ah, fuck that! I'm getting laid at Burning Man this year and that's final. Any fetching guys looking to hook up with a guy who has a couple of flame-throwers, 10 gallons of gasoline and an ungodly amount of black powder, meet me at Jiffy Lube. I'll be the one wearing the hat.

On the other hand, maybe I should just convince my boyfriend to come to Burning Man... Nah, too easy!